



Suggestions for Helping Yourself Through Grief

Grieving for a loved one can be very hard work. There are no rules and certainly no time tables. It is different for each individual. The depth, scope, and duration of your grief depends on your relationship with the loved one who died, your own personality, the support you receive, and your ability to effectively work on your grief. The following are some suggestions that may help as you work through your grief:

- ***Take care of yourself.*** You have experienced a very stressful situation that is physically, emotionally, and spiritually draining. It is important to eat well, get adequate sleep, and exercise regularly. You may not feel like doing anything. However, to begin the healing process, it is vital to attend to your physical well-being. If you are experiencing physical symptoms, seek medical advice from your physician.
- ***Talk about your grief.*** Express your grief openly. By sharing your grief outside yourself, healing occurs. Ignoring your grief won't make it go away; talking about it often makes you feel better. When possible, surround yourself with people who put no demands on you and let you grieve at your own pace. Find caring friends and relatives who will listen without judging or trying to "fix" your grief. You have a right to express your feelings.
- ***Avoid making major decisions.*** It is strongly suggested not to make any major decisions (such as moving, long term money matters, disposing of a loved one's personal items, etc.) unless absolutely necessary during the early stages of grief. Often you do not have the emotional resources to make good decisions during this difficult time.
- ***Do not try to avoid the pain.*** As humans, we naturally attempt to avoid pain at all costs. The pain associated with the loss of a loved one should not be avoided. In order to facilitate healing, you must allow yourself to experience those painful feelings of loss. As you process these feelings and attempt to deal with them, you may find that you are intuitively developing coping strategies that will assist you in working through your grief.
- ***Ask for the help you need.*** Also, accept help and support when offered. During a time of grief, the compassionate support of family and friends can aid in the healing process. Also, there are many resources available from hospice, community support groups, and religious organizations. Although the journey of grief often feels very lonely, there is a lot of assistance available if you seek it.

- ***Tears are healing.*** Don't be afraid to let yourself cry.
- ***Reading can be helpful.*** There are many excellent books dealing with grief and loss. If grief is understood, it is a little easier to handle.
- ***Nurture yourself.*** Be kind and gentle with yourself. Do the things that help restore your physical, emotional, and spiritual energy.
- ***Keep a journal.*** It is a good way to understand what you are feeling/thinking. Also it is an excellent tool to document your journey of healing.
- ***Try to plan things to look forward to:*** a trip, a visit, lunch with a special friend. As you are able, start to reinvest in your life
- ***Find quotes, articles, or pictures that are comforting.*** Put them where you can see them often.
- ***It is not abnormal to talk to your dead loved one.*** Also, if visiting the cemetery gives you peace and comfort, go as often as you need to. Part of grief work is discovering the unique things that work for you.
- ***When you are able, do something for someone else.*** This simple act may help to ease your pain.
- ***Take your life one moment, one hour, one day at a time.*** **REMEMBER:** Grief takes time! You will get better. Hold on to **HOPE**.